United Nations A/53/214

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 August 1998
English
Original: French

Fifty-third session
Item 113 of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions

Letter dated 3 August 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the attached copies, in English and French, of a statement issued on 31 July by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the elections in Cambodia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

* A/53/150

98-23063 (E) 100898

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the elections in Cambodia

The European Union notes with satisfaction that the initial report from the Joint International Observer Group on the elections in Cambodia concluded that the polling and counting was a process which was free and fair to an extent that enables it to reflect, in a credible way, the will of the Cambodian people. In the end, efforts to intimidate sections of the Cambodian population appear not to have significantly influenced the conduct or the climate of polling day itself.

The very high number of registered voters who turned up at polling stations to cast their ballot has given a clear signal that the Cambodian people are embracing democracy and are determined to decide their own political future.

There were no reports of cases of serious violence on voting day, except for one armed attack in Anlong Veng which led to the death of 10 people. The European Union strongly condemns this heinous act and expresses its sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

The European Union has been deeply involved in the electoral process, especially in voter registration and in polling observation by dispatching some 200 election observers. The European Union commends its special representative, Glenys Kinnock, the Chief Election Observer, Ambassador Sven Linder, and all election observers for their courage and substantial contribution towards internationally acceptable standards for democratic elections. The European Union also notes with appreciation the excellent cooperation and coordination between the European Observer Unit with the United Nations and other observer groups working together in the Joint International Observer Group.

A final consolidated assessment of elections in Cambodia will only be possible after all votes have been counted and, where necessary, recounted, the full reports of all election observers thoroughly analysed, complaints examined and appeals processes carried out satisfactorily.

The European Union calls upon all political forces in Cambodia to seize this opportunity to work together to the fullest extent towards national reconciliation and national reconstruction. The European Union expresses its strong hope that with the elections the foundation for the future well-being and prosperity of the people of Cambodia has been laid.

As stated by the European Union special representative, Glenys Kinnock, on 29 July 1998, it is the wish of the European Union to continue to engage constructively with Cambodia, particularly in the weeks and months ahead. Return to political normalcy will encourage the European Union to consider new assistance programmes to help Cambodia in its economic recovery.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.